

Message Text

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COME-00 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 OIC-02 EPG-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9067

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: UNCTAD, ETRD

SUBJECT: UNCTAD AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON COMMODITIES -
OPENING STATEMENTS

1. UNCTAD SYG COREA OPENED MEETING WITH STATEMENT CONTAINING
FOLLOWING POINTS: POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF COMMODITIES
ISSUES NOW UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED. IMPORTANCE AFFIRMED
AND REAFFIRMED AT POLITICAL LEVEL BY BOTH DEVELOPING AND
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, UP TO NOW THERE HAS BEEN
VIRTUALLY NO PROGRESS IN TRANSLATING THIS INTO
SPECIFIC ACTIONS. UNCTAD HAS HAD 24 MEETINGS UNDER IN-
TEGRATED PROGRAM BUT EXCEPT FOR RUBBER THERE IS NO CLEAR
PROSPECT OF ANY ACTION TO STABILIZE AND STRENGTHEN MARKETS.
CIEC POLITICAL DECISION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF "THE COMMON
FUND" IS HELPFUL AND TASK NOW IS TO BRIDGE GAP IN
DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS OF NATURE OF FUND. ALL GROUPS
TRYING TO DEFINE POSITIONS. FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO
SUCCEED IT IMPORTANT THAT GROUPS NOT TAKE FIRM POSITIONS
IN FAVOR WIDELY DIVERGENT APPROACHES. ALSO IMPORTANT
CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS
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BEFORE NOVEMBER. WE ALSO NEED TO DEVELOP NEW THINKING
TO ADVANCE WORK ON INDIVIDUAL COMMODITIES. UP TO NOW
MEETINGS HAVE BEEN "OLD STYLE" WITH TOO LITTLE FOCUS ON
CONCRETE MEASURES THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN AND
STABILIZE MARKETS. PROBLEMS ADMITTEDLY COMPLEX BUT
POLITICAL WILL TO MOVE ON INDIVIDUAL COMMODITIES
NOT MANIFESTED. COMMODITY PROBLEMS COMPLEX AND DIVERSE.

INDIVIDUAL COMMODITY MEETINGS SHOULD FOCUS ON SPECIFIC MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN AND STABILIZE MARKETS AND ONLY LATER TAKE UP OTHER ASPECTS. EFFORT TO ARRIVE AT COMPREHENSIVE COMMODITY AGREEMENTS WOULD TAKE TOO LONG. AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE IS NOT FORUM FOR SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS. BUT IT SHOULD REVIEW SITUATION, DRAW CONCLUSIONS THUS GIVING MAJOR STIMULUS TO WORK ELSEWHERE.

2. GROUP OF 77 (AMB.LALOVIC, YUGOSLAVIA) THEN MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:
QUOTE:

STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF 77

1. THIS THIRD SESSION OF THE AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETS AT AN IMPORTANT JUNCTURE IN THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE I.P.C. SINCE THE COMMITTEE LAST MET, THE NEGOTIATING CONFERENCE ON A COMMON FUND HAS BEEN HELD. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE PARIS CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION, IN FINALLY WINDING UP ITS WORK, ALSO ADDRESSED AND PRONOUNCED ITSELF ON THE ISSUE OF THE COMMON FUND, AS DID THE LONDON SUMMIT OF SEVEN MAJOR INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES PRECEDING IT. AS REGARDS THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS ON INDIVIDUAL COMMODITIES, WE HAVE NOW PASSED THE HALF-WAY MARK OF THE TIME ALLOTTED TO THIS PARTICULAR PHASE OF THE PROGRAMME, WITH THE DEADLINE OF FEBRUARY 1978, SET BY RESOLUTION 93 (IV) RAPIDLY
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APPROACHING. IT IS QUITE APPROPRIATE, THEREFORE THAT AT THIS JUNCTURE WE INDEED UNDERTAKE A THOROUGH AND COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF WHATEVER PROGRESS - OR LACK OF IT - THAT HAS BEEN RECORDED, AND DEAL WITH THOSE POLICY ISSUES THAT HAVE EMERGED IN THE COURSE OF THIS PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION.
MR. CHAIRMAN,

2. ALLOW ME NOW TO ADDRESS MYSELF TO THE FIRST OF THE TWO MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE IPC, THE NEGOTIATION OF A COMMON FUND. THE GROUP OF 77 CANNOT BUT REITERATE ITS DEEP REGRET AT THE COMPLETE FAILURE OF THE NEGOTIATING CONFERENCE ON A COMMON FUND, HELD LAST MARCH, TO ACHIEVE ANY CONCRETE RESULTS. DESPITE UTMOST EFFORTS BY THE GROUP OF 77 TO CONTRIBUTE TO A POSITIVE CONCLUSION OF THAT CONFERENCE ,
INCLUDING A FINAL ATTEMPT TO NARROW DOWN THE SCOPE OF THE DEBATE TO THE ONE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION: THE DECISION TO ESTABLISH A COMMON FUND, IT PROVED IMPOSSIBLE EVEN TO START REAL AND MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS, LET ALONE TO REGISTER PROGRESS OR SUCCESS. IT IS CLEAR THAT, APART FROM ANYTHING ELSE, THIS FAILURE OF THE NEGOTIATING CONFERENCE HAS CAUSED A SERIOUS LOSS OF MOMENTUM IN THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPC AS A WHOLE. FURTHERMORE, THIS FAILURE HAS ALSO PREVENTED IT FROM INFLUENCING, IN A POSITIVE AND TIMELY MANNER,

THE PROGRESS OF WORK IN THE NEGOTIATIONS ON INDIVIDUAL COMMODITIES.

3. DESPITE THIS SETBACK, HOWEVER, THE GROUP OF 77 IS INCLINED TO DERIVE SOME ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE AGREEMENT RECENTLY REACHED AMONG THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AT THE CIEC TO THE EFFECT THAT (QUOTE) "A COMMON FUND SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AS A NEW ENTITY TO SERVE AS A KEY INSTRUMENT IN ATTAINING THE AGREED OBJECTIVES OF THE IPC AS EMBODIED IN UNCTAD RESOLUTION 93 (IV)" (UNQUOTE). AS THIS REPRESENTS A CLEAR EXPRESSION OF COMMITMENT BY GOVERNMENTS OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ON SOME OF THE VERY POINTS OF PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE NEGOTIATING CONFERENCE BROKE DOWN LAST MARCH, IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT IT MAY SERVE AS SUFFICIENT POLITICAL IMPETUS TO THE RE-CONVENED NEGOTIATING CONFERENCE IN NOVEMBER.

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4. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO HONOUR THE PLEDGE MADE AT THE CIEC IN PARIS (QUOTE)" TO SECURE A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION" (UNQUOTE) OF THE RESUMED CONFERENCE, MUCH MORE WILL BE NEEDED THAN POLITICAL COMMITMENTS IN PRINCIPLE, WHICH IN ANY CASE HAVE BEEN LONG OVERDUE. THERE WILL BE THE OBVIOUS NECESSITY FOR THOROUGH, SUBSTANTIVE PREPARATIONS BY ALL GOVERNMENTS AND ALL GROUPS AND THE FORMULATION OF CLEAR NEGOTIATING POSITIONS. ON THE PART OF THE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF GROUP B, THERE SHOULD BE NO MORE ATTEMPTS TO COME UP AGAIN WITH A VARIETY OF ALTERNATIVE FORMS AND APPROACHES TO THE BASIC CONCEPT OF A COMMON FUND ON WHICH CONSENSUS WAS ALREADY OBTAINING IN NAIROBI. THERE MAY ALSO BE THE NEED FOR INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN GROUPS BEFORE THE START OF THE NOVEMBER CONFERENCE, SO AS TO ENABLE REAL NEGOTIATIONS TO TAKE PLACE AND CONCRETE RESULTS TO BE OBTAINED. MR. CHAIRMAN.

5. TURNING NOW TO THE STATE OF WORK IN THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS ON INDIVIDUAL COMMODITIES, THE GROUP OF 77 CANNOT FAIL TO NOTE WITH DEEP CONCERN THE FRUSTRATINGLY SLOW PACE AND MINIMAL PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN RECORDED SO FAR. AS MENTIONED EARLIER, WE HAVE NOW PASSED THE HALF-WAY MARK OF THE PERIOD ALLOWED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS

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PHASE OF THE PROGRAMME. SIXTEEN MEETINGS HAVE BEEN HELD ON EIGHT INDIVIDUAL COMMODITIES, BUT FOR THE REMAINING SIX COMMODITIES ON THE AGENDA ADOPTED BY THIS COMMITTEE FIRST PREPARATORY MEETINGS HAVE YET TO BEGIN. IN SPITE OF THE EFFORTS EXPENDED THUS FAR, MOST OF THESE MEETINGS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MOVE BEYOND THE STAGE OF PRELIMINARY CONSULTATIONS, OF REQUESTING FURTHER TECHNICAL STUDY AND ANALYSIS, AND OF DECIDING ON FURTHER EXPERT LEVEL DELIVERATIONS. ONLY IN ONE OR TWO CASES SUCH AS POSSIBLY IN THE CASE OF NATURAL RUBBER AND JUTE, HAS WORK REACHED A STAGE AT WHICH GOVERNMENTS ARE FOCUSSED ON CLEARLY DEFINED MEASURES IN PREPARATION FOR AN EVENTUAL NEGOTIATING CONFERENCE.

6. THE GROUP OF 77 HAS ALWAYS BEEN READY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT-MATTER AND GIVEN THE COMPLEXITY OF THE TRADE AND MARKETS OF MANY COMMODITIES, THERE MAY OFTEN BE A LEGITIMATE NEED FOR FURTHER STUDIES IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT A CORRECT ANALYSIS AND PRECISE DATA ON WHICH TO BASE DECISIONS BY GOVERNMENTS. THE URGE FOR FURTHER STUDIES, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT BE PURSUED FOR ITS OWN SAKE, OR WORSE, BE USED AS A PRETEXT FOR INACTION OR DELAY, BUT SHOULD AT ALL TIMES BE DIRECTED TOWARDS CLEAR OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE COMMODITY CONCERNED. MOREOVER, FOR A NUMBER OF COMMODITIES SUCH STUDY AND ANALYSIS HAVE IN FACT BEEN CONDUCTED FOR MANY YEARS, IF NOT BY UNCTAD THEN IN VARIOUS OTHER FORA AND ORGANIZATIONS, THUS OBTAINING THE NEED TO COVER THE SAME GROUND ALL OVER AGAIN.

7. WE MUST, THEREFORE, REITERATE OUR FIRM VIEW THAT IN THE COMMODITY MEETINGS A BALANCE MUST BE STRUCK, AND CONSCIOUSLY MAINTAINED, BETWEEN THE DESIRE FOR EXHAUSTIVE STUDY ON ALL ISSUES AND THE NEED FOR CONCRETE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE EFFECTIVE SOLUTION OF COMMODITY PROBLEMS, WITHIN THE AGREED TIME-TABLE OF THE IPC. FOR THIS, CLEARLY A MUCH GREATER POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND SENSE OF URGENCY WILL BE REQUIRED, PARTICULARLY ON THE PART OF THE MAJOR INDUSTRIALISED

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COUNTRIES, TO ENSURE THAT THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS REMAIN CORRECTLY FOCUSSED ON THE REQUIREMENTS OF THEIR OWN TERMS OF REFERENCE AND

DIRECTED TOWARDS THE ACHIEVMENT OF AGREED OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES AS SET OUT IN RESOLUTION 93 (IV). WITHOUT SUCH A COMMITMENT AND SENSE OF DIRECTION, ANY IMPROVEMENTS WHICH THIS COMMITTEE MAY EFFECT IN RELATION TO SCHEDULES OF MEETINGS, TYPES OF REPORTING AND DOCUMENTATION WILL ONLY PROVE A FUTILE EXERCISE.

8. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT UNLESS PROGRESS IN THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS IS SUBSTANTIALLY ENHANCED, WE SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO MEET THE DEADLINES SET BY RESOLUTION 93 (IV). IN THE LIGHT OF MY EARLIER GENERAL REMARKS, THEREFORE, IT APPEARS NECESSARY TO APPROACH THE QUESTION OF REVIEW OF THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS IN A MUCH MORE PURPOSEFUL, IMAGINATIVE AND FLEXIBLE WAY THAN HAS BEEN DONE BEFORE. HENCE, THE GROUP OF 77 IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY THE SUGGESTION TO ASSESS THE POSSIBILITY, BUT ALSO THE DESIRABILITY OF EARLY ACTION ON CERTAIN COMMODITIES, OF RELATIVELY FASTER MOVEMENT INTO A CONCRETE NEGOTIATING STAGE, AND TO SCHEDULE OR RE-SCHEDULE MEETINGS ACCORDINGLY. IT MAY ALSO BE USEFUL TO CONSIDER A SHORTER DURATION FOR FIRST PREPARATORY MEETINGS, WHEN USUALLY MORE PROCEDURAL MATTERS TEND TO BE DECIDED, WHILE CONVERSELY ALLOWING FOR LONGER SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS, IF INDEED SUBSTANTIVELY WARRANTED. WE MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF "BUNCHING" SOME OF THE SHORTER PREPARATORY MEETINGS E.G. HOLDING TWO SUCH MEETINGS IN SUCCESSION TO EACH OTHER DURING THE SAME WEEK; THIS MIGHT HAVE THE EFFECT OF SAVING BOTH TIME AND EXPENSE FOR GOVERNMENTS. THE PRACTICABILITY OF THESE AND OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS MAY PERHAPS BE MOST EFFICIENTLY ASSESSED BY A SMALL WORKING GROUP ON THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS WHICH THE COMMITTEE COULD ESTABLISH AT THIS SESSION.

9. FOR THE SAKE OF GREATER EFFICIENCY AND PROGRESS, THERE WOULD ALSO BE MUCH TO SAY FOR RATIONALISATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS. AS SUGGESTED BY THE SECRETARIAT, INSTEAD OF THE PRESENT, RATHER ELABORATE "NARRATIVE" TYPE REPORTS, WE COULD LOOK INTO THE ADVANTAGES OF RESORTING TO BRIEF, COMMUNIQUE-TYPE REPORTS, WHICH WOULD

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ONLY SET OUT THE DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AGREED UPON, AT THE MOST PRECEDED BY A SHORT ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS BUT WITHOUT DETAILED REFERENCE TO INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY STATEMENTS.

10. THE GROUP OF 77 IS ACUTELY AWARE OF THE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE RISING VOLUME AND DELAY IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF DOCUMENTATION FOR THE MEETINGS. REDUCING THE ACTUAL VOLUME OF DOCUMENTATION, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT ENTAIL IMPAIRMENT OF THE SUBSTANTIVE NEED FOR SUCH MATERIAL. THERE IS, OF COURSE, AN OBVIOUS NEED FOR GOVERNMENTS TO RESTRAIN THEMSELVES IN REQUESTING MORE AND FURTHER STUDIES ON ALL KINDS OF PROBLEMS AND ASPECTS AS, IN FACT, DEVELOPED CONSUMER DELEGATIONS HAVE OFTEN INDULGED IN DURING THE PAST MEETINGS. THIS, HOWEVER, IN NO WAY OBVIATES THE OBLIGATION ON THE PART OF THE SECRETARIAT TO CONTINUE TO ENSURE THAT THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION

TO MADE AVAILABLE TO DELEGATIONS SUFFICIENTLY IN ADVANCE.

THESE ARE, THE POINTS THAT THE GROUP OF 77
WISHES TO PUT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE. AS YOU HAVE CERTAINLY NOTICED
WE HAVE ADVANCED A NUMBER OF CONCRETE PROPOSALS DESIGNED TO DEAL
WITH ISSUES WHOSE SOLUTION IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE SUCCESSFUL
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED PROGRAMME. STILL, MR. CHAIRMAN,
ALLOW ME TO SAY THAT NO MATTER HOW SUCCESSFUL WE MAY BE IN
DECIDING UPON THESE ISSUES - POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVE
SUCCESSFUL END RESULTS OF THE WHOLE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS, AS
ENVISAGED BY RESOLUTION 93 (IV), IS ESSENTIAL.

THE GROUP OF 77 IS DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER THE FACT THAT SOME
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO QUESTION THE VALIDITY OF SOME
IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE INTEGRATED PROGRAMME, UNDER THE PRETEXT
OF THEIR CONCERN ABOUT INTERVENTION IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE. AS
LONG AS SUCH SITUATION WOULD PERSIST, THERE WILL BE LITTLE HOPE
FOR A MEANINGFUL PROGRESS IN OUR UNDERTAKINGS.

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WE DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT COMMON SENSE WILL PREVAIL AND
ENABLE US TO FACE, IN A REALISTIC MANNER, THESE AND OTHER
UNDERLYING REASONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SLOW AND UNSATISFACTORY
PACE OF THE PREPARATORY PROCESS.

IT IS OUR EXPECTATION, THEREFORE, THAT THIS THIRD SESSION
OF THE AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE DOES NOT AGAIN BECOME A
ROUTINE MEETING ENGAGED SIMPLY IN THE RE-SCHEDULING OF MEETINGS,
BUT THAT IT INDEED FULFILS ITS MANDATE, I.E. TO MAKE AN OBJECTIVE
EVALUATION OF THE STATE OF WORK AT PRESENT AND TO GIVE CLEAR
GUIDELINES AS TO HOW WE SHOULD PROCEED IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.
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3. GROUP B IS NOW WORKING ON STATEMENT OF REPLY.SORENSEN

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